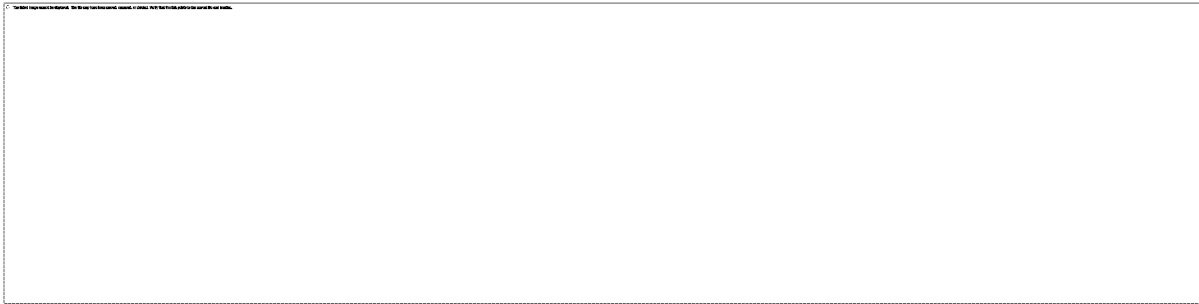


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Sent: 12/21/2020 5:23:31 PM
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Subject: EPA Issues Stronger Lead Regulations to Protect Children's Health



EPA Issues Stronger Lead Regulations to Protect Children's Health

Agency issues first, stronger lead clearance levels in almost 20 years

WASHINGTON (December 21, 2020) — Today, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced a new action to better protect American children from the dangers of lead. This final rule will lower the clearance levels for the amount of lead that can remain in dust on floors and window sills after lead removal activities, known as abatement. These new clearance levels will reduce lead dust-related risks to children in pre-1978 homes and childcare facilities where lead abatement activities take place. After actions are taken to remove lead from a building, those buildings must then be tested to make sure that the cleaning activities were successful. These “clearance levels” indicate that lead dust was effectively removed at the end of the abatement work. EPA’s new clearance levels are 10 micrograms (µg) of lead in dust per square foot (ft²) for floor dust and 100 µg/ft² for window sill dust, significantly lower than the previous levels of 40 µg/ft² for floor dust and 250 µg/ft² for window sill dust.

“For too long, many children, especially those in low-income communities, have been exposed to unacceptable levels of lead,” **said EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler**. “This overdue regulation is yet another example of the Trump Administration’s commitment to reduce sources of lead exposure and to provide a healthier environment for our children.”

“Through my experience working as a pediatric neurosurgeon, I’ve seen firsthand the devastating impact lead exposure can have upon the health of children,” **said HUD Secretary Ben Carson**. “I applaud the EPA on their work to ensure healthy homes for all children and appreciate their partnership with HUD as we work together toward this common goal.”

Lead-contaminated dust, from chipped or peeling lead-based paint is one of the most common causes of elevated blood lead levels in children. Lead dust can be generated when lead-based paint deteriorates or is disturbed. Lead exposure, particularly at higher doses, can pose a significant health and safety threat to children and can cause irreversible and life-long health effects.

Since the 1970s, the United States has made significant progress in lowering children's blood lead levels. No safe level of lead exposure has been identified for children, making them particularly vulnerable and further

underscoring the importance that doing anything to reduce exposures can improve life outcomes. In 2001, EPA set hazard standards for determining when lead in dust presents a human health hazard and set clearance levels for lead in dust for floors and window sills in housing and childcare facilities. In 2019, EPA updated the hazard levels, making a monumental step forward in children's health protection. Together, EPA's 2019 hazard standards and 2020 clearance levels reflect the best available science on potential human health effects that result from exposure to lead.

View the final rule and learn more: <https://www.epa.gov/lead/hazard-standards-and-clearance-levels-lead-paint-dust-and-soil-tsca-sections-402-and-403>

Learn more about how you can reduce the risk of lead exposure to your children or in your community: <https://www.epa.gov/lead/protect-your-family-exposures-lead>

Learn more about the lead-based paint program: <https://www.epa.gov/lead>

Learn about EPA's efforts to work with its federal partners to improve coordinated activities and implement objectives of the December 2018 *Federal Action Plan to Reduce Childhood Lead Exposures and Associated Health Impacts*: <https://www.epa.gov/lead/federal-action-plan-reduce-childhood-lead-exposure>

Background

Last year, Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Secretary Ben Carson joined Administrator Wheeler to announce stronger, more protective standards for determining when lead in dust presents a human health hazard. In addition to reducing childhood exposures to lead from lead-based paint, EPA has made tremendous gains in reducing lead exposure and associated harms from other sources. Some highlights include:

- **December 2018**– EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler, HUD Secretary Ben Carson, and U.S. Health and Human Services Deputy Secretary Eric Hargan unveiled the Trump Administration's *Federal Action Plan to Reduce Childhood Lead Exposures and Associated Health Impacts* (Lead Action Plan). Developed through cross-governmental collaboration of the President's Task Force on Environmental Health Risks and Safety Risks to Children, which includes 17 federal departments and offices, the Lead Action Plan is a blueprint for reducing lead exposure and associated harms by working with a range of stakeholders, including states, tribes and local communities, along with businesses, property owners and parents.
- **December 2019** – EPA researchers co-led a cross-agency workshop on progress to “support and conduct critical research to inform efforts to reduce lead exposures and related health risks,” which furthered cross-federal agency collaboration on the *Lead Action Plan*.
- **February 2020** – Announced the availability of \$39.9 million to reduce lead in drinking water under the Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation (WIIN) Act.
- **March 2020** – Announced the availability of \$26 million to states for the Lead Testing in School and Child Care Program Drinking Water grant program under the WIIN Act.
- **June 2020** – Released a proposal to reduce the clearance levels for lead in dust on floors and windowsills after lead removal activities.
- **July 2020** – Announced a final rule to reduce lead in plumbing materials used in public water systems, homes, schools, and other facilities. The Use of Lead-Free Pipes, Fittings, Fixtures, Solder, and Flux for Drinking Water final rule significantly limits the lead content allowed in plumbing materials used in new construction and in the replacement of existing plumbing from 8% to 0.25% in accordance with the Reduction of Lead in Drinking Water Act of 2011.
- **July 2020** – Announced the availability of more than \$4 million to tribal consortia for the Tribal Lead Testing in School and Child Care Program under the WIIN Act.
- **October 2020** – Released the *Lead Awareness in Indian Country: Keeping our Children Healthy!* curriculum, a robust set of educational tools that provide practical, on-the-ground, community-based

resources to reduce childhood lead exposure. This series of four modules provides lesson plans, worksheets, key messages, presentation slides, and kids' activity sheets that tribes and community leaders can use to improve public awareness of the dangers associated with lead exposure and promote preventative actions to reduce childhood lead exposure.

- **October 2020- Announced** projects that were selected to receive nearly \$40 million in grant funding under WIIN. These first-ever selections under the WIIN Act's Reduction in Lead Exposure via Drinking Water grant will be used to assist disadvantaged communities and schools with removing sources of lead in drinking water. The selected grantees will conduct projects that will reduce lead exposure in drinking water by replacing thousands of lead service lines and removing potential sources of lead in hundreds of schools and childcare facilities across the United States.



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